ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Methods for counting bacteria are described that include: (a) preparing an assay sample by staining a specimen using a fluorescent dye, thereby producing a difference in fluorescent intensity between live bacteria and dead bacteria; (b) detecting optical information from the assay sample; and (c) classifying and counting the live bacteria and the dead bacteria based on the detected optical information. Bacteria counting apparatuses and reagent kits for counting bacteria are also described.